



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 17 January 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
17 JANUARY 1968

1. Guatemala

The Guatemalan Government declared a state of national alert last night. All political activity is suspended, carrying of arms is prohibited, and press coverage of terrorist activities is restricted. Apart from the official countermeasures, we expect that right-wing terror squads will now move quickly to strike at anyone they consider "subversive."

In addition to the shooting of the four Americans, there were three politically motivated assassinations in the 24-hour period ending yesterday. Another attempted killing failed.

2. South Vietnam

All strikes are to be called off for the time being. This respite is the product of a bargaining session between the government and union leaders Monday night. The government agreed to give electrical workers a retroactive cost-of-living allowance in exchange for the temporary back-to-work order from the union.

The no-strike pledge is good only through Tet, however, and problems could develop unless the government moves toward a more permanent accommodation--including release of jailed union leaders.

3. Soviet Union

The Russian press is beginning to acquaint its readers with the names of prominent presidential aspirants in the US. Today's Annex reviews a recent Izvestia article on this subject.

4. Soviet Union

Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Podgorny traveled on from Warsaw to East Berlin before returning home last night. A statement out of Moscow merely says that in talks with Ulbricht and company, the Soviet leaders discussed "questions concerning the Communist movement, further political and economic cooperation, and some problems of the present-day international situation."

5. Israel-Jordan

Yesterday we noted that Husayn was very much alarmed over the chance of Israeli retaliation for the continuing terrorist raids. Now Ambassador Barbour, reporting from the Israeli side, adds that patience in Tel Aviv on this score is indeed wearing dangerously thin. 50X1

6. Dominican Republic

President Balaguer seems determined to use a strong arm in dealing with student agitation at the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo. 50X1

7. Nigeria

The Nigerian civil war, now six months old, will probably continue for some time. Federal forces have not been able to win a clear-cut victory, but they have somewhat the upper hand and seem capable of keeping it.

Prospects for peace, or even a cease-fire, remain poor.

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ANNEX

Soviet Preview of the US Election Campaign

Izvestia, the Soviet's second largest newspaper, carried a lengthy article on 7 January reviewing possible presidential candidates in the US. These are Izvestia's conclusions:

Senator McCarthy--a "symbol hurled into the restless waters of the Democratic organization," who intends to gather under his banner all those opposed to Vietnam. He has scant hope, however, of getting nominated.

Senator Kennedy--McCarthy is really a stalking horse for Kennedy; Kennedy might take the reins if McCarthy attracts sizable voter interest in the primaries. Attributing especially Machiavelian motives to Kennedy, however, Izvestia believes that the Senator will more likely back President Johnson--preferring the victory of any Democrat in 1968 in order to realize better his own ambitions later. In 1968 Kennedy would run for vice president for the sake of a Democratic victory.

Richard Nixon--Long ago welcomed by the "military-industrial corporations and bankers of the Pacific Coast" and now backed by "the 'new money' of the missile and oil kings," Nixon is further described as a "political dealer-chameleon" who has slipped behind the mask of a "liberal, moderate conservative" but in reality is "a reactionary and an advocate of a 'hard line' in foreign policy."

Governor Reagan--He gets short shrift, being portrayed only as a former movie actor who has replaced Goldwater in the notorious position of representing the extreme right wing of the Republican Party.

Governor Rockefeller--may run after all, as suggested by the "secret lessons on foreign policy" he has been getting from Harvard's Henry Kissinger. According to the article, "influential monopolist circles" intend to back Rockefeller.

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Governor Romney--"candidate of the bankers and industrialists of the northwest"; he is trying to avoid a stand on Vietnam in order to keep a free hand for political maneuvers and schemes.

Senator Percy--seen merely as a "possible pretender"; a "relative moderate."

George Wallace--"fanatical supporter of segregation and double-dyed 'ultra' who banks on the so-called white backlash."

Izvestia noted that although Wallace can hardly believe earnestly in victory, he may draw off enough votes to throw the election into the House of Representatives. The article says that the Republicans have only to win some 30 seats in the House to win a majority, "with all the consequences resulting from it if the President is elected by this House."

Covering any eventuality, Izvestia concluded that although many things can change during the campaign, "one thing is clear--the monopolist bourgeoisie will again try to place in the White House 'their own man,' who will pursue a course profitable for them within the country as well as abroad."

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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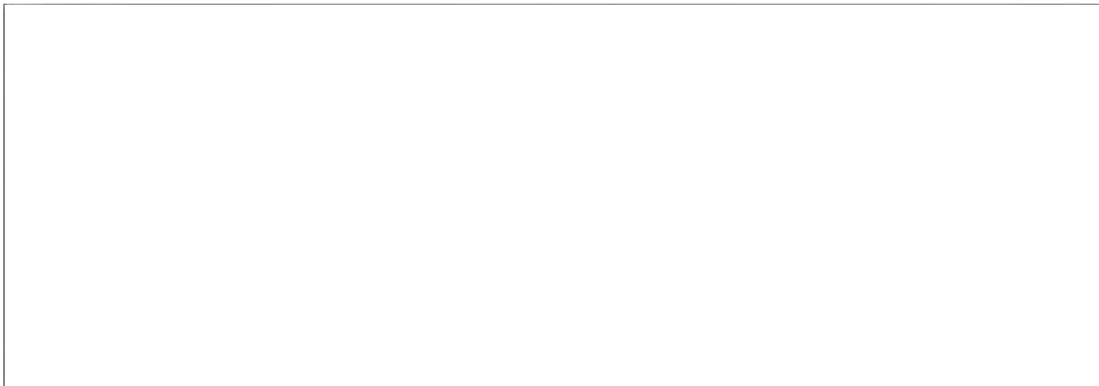
I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Reaction to the War:

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[redacted] in groups the Vietnamese continually voice their pride in their nation, in its history of resisting aggression, and in the fact that it is now "defeating" the most powerful nation on earth. Workers, however, have tended to become corrupted by the war and are engaging in petty theft and black marketeering. Primary effort is given to keeping safe and alive. [redacted] American leaflets on how to build small bomb shelters were picked up and used extensively.) In private, some of the Vietnamese voice sentiments about peace, the happiness it would bring, and the horror of the air raids.

[redacted] in spite of a deep longing for peace and considerable depression over economic difficulties and personal hardships, no one contemplated even for a moment trying to do anything against the will of the government. A fatalistic attitude, "as if the war were a flood or a hurricane to be survived," seemed to be quite common.

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Tighter Security: North Vietnam is tightening even further the already rigid security controls that grip the cities. The party daily, Nhan Dan, has called for greater efforts to keep the urban population in line and thus implies the regime is having some security problems. The article pointed out that watching for enemies of the state is not just the work of security police--all citizens were urged to lend a hand in spying on their neighbors to expose "espionage agents and counterrevolutionaries." This means anyone, in short, who might be expressing less than wholehearted enthusiasm for the war effort. There also was a strong hint in the article that a crackdown is coming on black marketers.

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French Left Raises Funds for Hanoi: Various Communist and leftist-oriented organizations in France have joined together in a project termed "Ship for Vietnam," designed to raise at least one half million dollars in goods and money to be shipped to North Vietnam. The French Communist Party has pledged to raise the lion's share of the amount with other groups contributing according to their means.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

US Being Made Ogre on Talks Issue: North Vietnam and its European bloc allies continue to stress the importance of Foreign Minister Trinh's offer of talks with the US in return for an end to the bombing. This propaganda is keyed to the theme that the US is rejecting peace overtures.

In an unusually detailed broadcast beamed in English to US servicemen in South Vietnam on 15 January, Hanoi reported both the national and international figures who have called upon the administration to respond to the Trinh statement. The broadcast listed Senators Robert Kennedy, McCarthy, Fulbright, and Cooper as leaders on the domestic scene demanding an end to the bombing, and quoted a number of editorials in leading US papers to that effect. Remarks by leaders of several NATO countries calling for an end to the air raids also were quoted.

Bloc comment has been generally cautious in treating Trinh's statement, but has been uniform in claiming that the US has failed to respond. A Hungarian broadcast on 15 January is typical. It claimed that Washington had given no sign of interest in negotiations and quoted recent remarks by US officials to demonstrate an uncompromising US position on settlement of the war. Like the Hanoi broadcast, that

from Budapest listed the NATO countries which have voiced support for a cessation of the bombing and noted remarks by Senator Mansfield.

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Hanoi Ballyhoos Deserters: Hanoi in an international broadcast on 16 January reported that three more "antiwar" American soldiers have sought political asylum in Sweden. The broadcast went on to wrap up previous reports on the 13 other recent defectors to Sweden and to report the protest at the Justice Department on 12 January.

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